

## A MILITARY EDUCATION.

The First Colored Graduate at West Point Descants on a Military Education for Afro Americans—Our Editorial Brings a Ringing Reply From Lieut. Flipper—The Value of Such an Education not Appreciated—A Woeful Lack of Preparation for these Schools.

Editor The Colored American:—Your editorial, in a recent number of The Colored American, anent the appointment of Negro youth to the Military and Naval Academics, was timely and to the point. It is a matter to which I have given much thought and observation and my conclusions are:

First, our people do not take sufficient interest in these two institutions. The education given there is worth any sacrifice necessary to obtain it. The training and discipline can not be had at any other school in the world.

Second, the young men of the race, who have been sent to these schools, have not, as a rule, had sufficient education at the time they went there. The prescribed educational requirements for admission are low, too low, due to the unwise fear of some overzealous Congressman that the youth of "the people," would be kept out, if the requirements were made high. The result is that many young men succeed in entering who can not possibly take the prescribed course, because of lack of mental training before going there. I am convinced that this has been, to a very great extent, the trouble with the Negroes who have gone to West Point. Years of observation of our people have convinced me of this.

At the risk of being severely criticised, I shall assert that the educational training being given our people now is vastly inferior to what it was prior to 1875. I know from my own experience that it is no uncommon thing to see teachers with first-class certificates and graduates with diplomas who can not correctly spell words in common, every day use, who can not properly fold or address a letter, who have not even elementary notions of English grammar, and yet have no end of pretensions as educated persons. I come in contact with them every day. In the ordinary schools pupils are too often graduated not because they are proficient but to toady to some social requirement, to sustain the claim of the school for handling a large number of students or for some other cause. Did any one ever hear of a pupil being dismissed from any of these schools for deficiency? At West Point the student must be proficient, especially if he be a Ne-



EX-LIEUT. HENRY OSSIAN FLIPPER.

First Negro Graduate from West Point Military Academy. His Thoughtful and Candid Analysis of the Causes that Bar the Colored Youth Should be Read by Every Friend of Education in America.

gro student, or he is ruthlessly dismissed for deficiency. My class entered the Military Academy with one hundred and twenty odd members and only seventy-six were graduated, the others having fallen by the way for deficiency.

As to the cadets appointed at large by the President, the authority to make such appointments was given to him with special reference to the sons of men in the Army and Navy, who CAN NOT acquire residence in a State and CAN NOT therefore be appointed by a member of Congress. This is one reason why no President has ever appointed a Negro to these schools. He hasn't the power to do so under the law.

The remedy for this condition, which we all deplore, seems to me to be this: Our people, as a whole, must take more interest in these institutions. Our young men must be better educated—they do not learn enough mathematics in any of our schools—and only those

must be selected for appointment who are known to have sufficient attainments to take up and pursue the course taught at West Point. It is not enough to win the appointment at a competitive examination. The applicant must not only be able to win it but, as I said, he must be prepared for the work before him, and it is all work at West Point and Annapolis. He must be a man who is not easily discouraged and who think it more important to win than to resent real or fancied insults.

Why can not our own institutions of learning ascertain what the course is at West Point and Annapolis and make a specialty of preparing boys for those Academies? There are hundreds of schools that prepare white boys for them. Wilberforce, Howard and dozens of others can do so as well as any of them and they should prepare them with reference, not only to gaining admission, but also with reference to the future work to be done there.

(Continued on thirteenth page.)

## THE GALILEAN FISHERMEN

The Principles, Purposes and Progress of a Great Industrial Organization—Thriving Plantations in Virginia and Alabama—What the Genius and Industry of a Splendid Woman is Doing for Race Elevation—An Outline of the Career and Work of Mrs. Maggie Whiteman Steward.

In the year 1873, in the city of Alexandria, Va., an incorporation was secured for an institution that is destined to be a powerful factor in the future development of the Negro's ability for self-government. That institution is known as the Grand United Order of Galilean Fishermen. From a benevolent standpoint this organization is not unlike the Odd Fellows, Masons and other beneficial societies of like character; but in connection with its christian benevolent feature, it is one of the most powerful industrial institutions in America. About ten years ago this institution established an Endowment Department, paying at the death of its members from one to four hundred dollars upon the smallest premium of any institution in the United States. By wise and judicious management it accumulated quite an amount of money from its endowment and other departments. They have now launched out into the business world in full, having organized a regalia department manufacturing all kinds of regalia, banners and badges for various institutions. Thus giving employment to a large number of colored girls at a good salary when elsewhere they might not have found one.

It has purchased in the County of Nottoway, state of Virginia, a large plantation of several hundred acres of land on which they have erected a home for the aged members of the order and a training school for the orphan children of the institution. This feature alone, is worthy of the highest commendation of an intelligent public, because in this particular largely they have outstripped all other organizations in America. On this farm, the orphan children will be educated in the arts of industry. Thus, giving them a chance to grow up in the world and earn a livelihood for themselves. On August 1st they launched out in the state of Alabama and purchased in the county of Tuscaloosa, a large plantation adjoining the corporate limits of the city of Tuscaloosa. This farm alone cost ten thousand dollars and they are

(Continued on ninth page.)